

"The first instinct of the religious consciousness in the future must be to save the earth as a divine voice, which once destroyed, will no longer be heard. Without this voice, it is a question whether written or spoken scriptures, or even scriptures within the human person, can be heard or understood."

[Thomas Berry]

The call for environmental justice; for conservation and stewardship of all which our Creator-God has given us; for equality and equity in our distribution of these resources, especially to protect the poor and powerless in our midst (with whom God has stood throughout human history); the command to turn away from wasteful consumption, to create new ways to meet the basic human needs of all persons... these are Biblical mandates, which require our specific, intentional, and institutional response as Christians. The call to restore our environment; to develop renewable and reusable resources; to create a sustainable economy is to be faithful to the future which God intends for us. The promise from God is this: As we act together, responding to God's claim upon us (as the Creator of the universe and every life form), God will sustain us.

It is in this Spirit that we gather this afternoon, in the unity of our diversity as Christ's disciples in this generation; in this community of the Ironbound; in this city of Newark; as citizens of the world; as concerned clergy and lay persons who have chosen to preface tomorrow's national observance of Environmental Justice Day with a time of reflection and a call to action...The action to which Christ Jesus calls us, which is to be the lights in the world by which the world can find its way in the difficult years that lie ahead. In this worship hour, may God bless all that is said and sung; prayed and praised; kept silent and shared openly. May God bless and inspire us to reaffirm a mutual commitment to God's quality of environmental and social justice.

Immediately following the worship service and vigil (on Ferry Street), there will be a coffee reception in St. Stephan's downstairs Fellowship Hall. Please plan to join us using the Wilson Avenue entrance (large red double doors).